

soon asleep—at least I think I was—when I felt something touch me. The impression was distinctly like a small hand, very cold, drawn slowly across my face. It awoke me, if I was asleep, instantly. I sat up in bed and called out, 'Hallo! who is there?' No answer. The room was lighted up clearly by the fire. I could see nothing. What could it have been? The silk tassel of a bell-pull pendent from the top of the four-poster caught my eye. Perhaps it was that? I lay down and flopped about on my pillow, and the bell-rope swayed and the tassel bobbed and swung to and fro, but it was far above my face. Besides it was not cold. 'Could it have been a rat walking across my face? Ugh! But no! the thing was cold and damp.'

Then it occurred to me that there were some very frolicsome young gentlemen among the smart people staying in the castle—I had left three or four in the billiard room—and it was just possible that they might end off their evening by playing a practical joke on the late arrival, a species of amusement then very much in vogue, in common with 'sells' and other atrocities. The thought made me furious. I got up, lighted a candle, looked under the bed first, and proceeded to make an examination of everything in the room. The tapestry was continuous, as I have said, round the room; but it was detached at one place, and raising it up there, I perceived a door in the wall opposite that which led to my room from the landing at the top of the staircase. I tried to open the door, but it was locked from the outside. I thought I heard whispers and something like a laugh, which confirmed my notion, and I addressed the imaginary culprits in very strong language: 'If you don't let me go to sleep, I swear I will keep you there for the night whoever you are! Do you hear?' No answer. I pulled over the table and placed it against the door; to it I added the arm-chairs, the dressing table, washhand stand, &c., and then, having barred the exit to my satisfaction, I returned to bed and awaited events. I listened intently. Half an hour passed, not a whisper. Not a sound save the click clack of the clock. It was half-past one. Perhaps it was that tassel after all? I may have jumped up in my sleep! It *was* the tassel! I *fancied* it was cold. And so cogitating I passed at last into dreamland, where I abode for a brief moment. In my old campaigning days I was roused by the slightest touch. No noise would awake me save 'réveille,' 'boot and saddle,' or the like. But, indeed, no human hand, death cold as it was, could have been more definite than that which I felt now—four fingers and thumb passed lightly across my face from right to left. The fire still burned brightly. 'This is disgraceful! You are paltry cads to play these tricks; but by Heavens you shall account to me for it all, be sure,'

I jumped out of bed in a towering rage. I was not in the least

terrified, but I was very angry, for I still believed I *was*, being subjected to a stupid practical joke. It was past three o'clock, and it seemed inconceivable that people, young or old, would be wasting the hours so foolishly. But they must be somewhere about. I listened once more outside the barricaded door; then I bethought me that there might be some communication from the balcony. Raising the window I looked out, and perceived that the door I had been closing up so carefully opened out on a flight of stone steps which terminated in the courtyard. Equipping myself in dressing-gown and slippers, I opened my bedroom door, and descended the corkscrew staircase to the first corridor—it was the bachelor quarter. A long vista of boots and shoes outside the bedroom doors suggested that their owners were in bed; the *spiritus asper* from inside indicated that they were asleep. There was no other sound. I retraced my steps to my room and securely locked my door. I examined my face in the glass well. Savage and serious, that was all. Excited certainly, but no fever, no wildness in the eye. I replaced the table before the fire, on which I piled fresh peat and wood, drew one of the arm-chairs alongside it, and *pour me distraire*—for I really was what Americans call 'a little wild'—I opened my letters, tried to read, made memoranda, and listened to the iron tongue of the clock—Sam Ward's 'deadly auctioneer,' who 'counts the moments one by one!'—till, at what time I know not, being in a heavy slumber, I knew the hand had been across my face! No room for doubt! The touch lingered there! 'Something,' whatever it was, had resolved I should not sleep—or sleeping, that I should soon be awakened—in that room. I would abandon the field! It is cowardly to fly if there is an enemy to encounter, but here I had no chance. Pulling on shoes, stockings, and nether garments, I wrapped myself in the dressing-gown, unlocked my door, gave a look around, and with a pious wish for the welfare of my persecutors I stole forth, candle in hand, descended the staircase flight after flight till I reached the billiard room. The white cover on the table would be an excellent quilt. I took it off, and with the cushions made myself a comfortable couch on one of the sofas. Worn out by a long journey and by these constant alarms, I ceased to trouble myself with angry speculations and sank at last into a profound sleep. It was a short one! I was awakened this time by a piercing scream. As I started up in mortal horror I saw a figure in white vanishing from the room! It was broad daylight! The sun was streaming brightly in on my couch through the window. The early housemaid had come in to open the shutters, perceived a prostrate form in shroud-like white on the sofa, screamed, and vanished!

It was seven o'clock; I walked to the open window and looked out. There was a strip of garden a few feet below, through which a path led down to the river, which I saw sparkling in the